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| APPLICATION NO. | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO. |
|--|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 10/709,329 | 04/28/2004 | Earl Rotman | 20107/1200838-US1 | 3328 |
| 7278 | 7590 | 08/10/2007 | EXAMINER | |
| DARBY & DARBY P.C. P.O. BOX 770 Church Street Station New York, NY 10008-0770 | | | NGUYEN, NGA B | |
| ART UNIT | | PAPER NUMBER | | |
| 3692 | | | | |
| MAIL DATE | | DELIVERY MODE | | |
| 08/10/2007 | | PAPER | | |

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

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**BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS
AND INTERFERENCES**

Application Number: 10/709,329

Filing Date: April 28, 2004

Appellants: ROTMAN ET AL.

MAILED

AUG 10 2007

GROUP 3600

Richard J. Katz (Reg. No. 47,698)
For Appellant

EXAMINER'S ANSWER

This is in response to the Appeal Brief filed September 8, 2006 appealing from the Office action mailed January 17, 2006.

(1) *Real Party in Interest*

A statement identifying the real party in interest is contained in the brief.

(2) *Related Appeals and Interferences*

A statement identifying the related appeals and interferences which will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the decision in the pending appeal is contained in the brief.

(3) *Status of Claims*

The statement of the status of the claims contained in the brief is correct.

(4) *Status of Amendments After Final*

The statement of the status of amendments after final contained in the brief is correct.

(5) *Summary of Claimed Subject Matter*

The summary of claimed subject matter contained in the brief is correct.

(6) *Grounds of Rejection to be Reviewed on Appeal*

The grounds of rejection to be reviewed on Appeal contained in the brief, is correct.

(7) *Claims Appendix*

The copy of the appealed claims contained in the Appendix to the brief is correct.

(8) *Evidence Relied Upon*

The statement of the evidence relied upon contained in the brief is correct.

(9) *Grounds of Rejection*

The following grounds of rejection are applicable to the appealed claims:

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

1. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

2. Claims 1-74 are rejected under 35 U.S.C 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter, particularly, an abstract idea.

The claims, as presently claimed and best understood were reconsidered in light of the "Examination Guidelines for Computer-Related Inventions" and were found to be non-statutory. Discussion of the analysis of the claims under the guidelines follows.

As to claims 1-18, 30-49, 61-62, and 73-74 the claimed invention is implemented as Non-Functional Descriptive Material *Per Se*. "An article suitable for trade as a unit" is considered a non-functional descriptive material. Where certain types of descriptive material, such as music, literature, art, photographs and mere arrangements or compilations of facts or data, are merely stored so as to be read or outputted by a computer without creating any functional interrelationship, either as part of the stored data or as part of the computing processes performed by the computer, then such descriptive material alone does not impart functionality either to the data as so structured, or to the computer. Such "descriptive material" is not a process, machine, manufacture or composition of matter. (Data consists of facts, which become information when they are seen in context and convey meaning to people. Computers process data without any understanding of what that data represents. Computer Dictionary 210 (Microsoft Press, 2d ed. 1994).)

As to claims 19-29, 50-60, and 63-72, the claimed invention manipulates an abstract idea without practical application in the technological arts, because the claimed invention does not produce a “useful, concrete and tangible result”. The claimed invention as a whole must accomplish a practical application. That is, it must produce a “useful, concrete and tangible result.” State Street, 149 F.3d at 1373, 47 USPQ2d at 1601-02. The purpose of this requirement is to limit patent protection to inventions that possess a certain level of “real world” value, as opposed to subject matter that represents nothing more than an idea or concept, or is simply a starting point for future investigation or research (Brenner v. Manson, 383 U.S. 519, 528-36, 148 USPQ 689, 693-96); In re Ziegler, 992, F.2d 1197, 1200-03, 26 USPQ2d 1600, 1603-06 (Fed. Cir. 1993)). Accordingly, a complete disclosure should contain some indication of the practical application for the claimed invention, i.e., why the applicant believes the claimed invention is useful.

A claim is limited to a practical application when the method, as claimed, produces a concrete, tangible and useful result; i.e., the method recites a step or act of producing something that is concrete, tangible and useful. See AT &T, 172 F.3d at 1358, 50 USPQ2d at 1452. Likewise, a machine claim is statutory when the machine, as claimed, produces a concrete, tangible and useful result (as in State Street, 149 F.3d at 1373, 47 USPQ2d at 1601) and/or when a specific machine is being claimed (as in Alappat, 33 F.3d at 1544, 31 USPQ2d at 1557 (*> en< banc).

Therefore, for the reason set forth above, claims 1-74 are non-statutory, because they are directed solely to Non-Functional Descriptive Material *Per Se* and an abstract idea without practical application in the technological arts.

(10) Response to Argument

Regarding to Group I claims 1-18, 30-49, 61-62, and 73-74, Appellants argues that the claimed article is a useful, concrete, and tangible item and, therefore, consequently meets the requirements of 35 U.S.C § 101.

In response, As to claims 1-18, 30-49, 61-62, and 73-74 the claimed invention is implemented as Non-Functional Descriptive Material *Per Se*. “An article suitable for trade as a unit” is considered a non-functional descriptive material. Where certain types of descriptive material, such as music, literature, art, photographs and mere arrangements or compilations of facts or data, are merely stored so as to be read or outputted by a computer without creating any functional interrelationship, either as part of the stored data or as part of the computing processes performed by the computer, then such descriptive material alone does not impart functionality either to the data as so structured, or to the computer. Such “descriptive material” is not a process, machine, manufacture or composition of matter. (Data consists of facts, which become information when they are seen in context and convey meaning to people. Computers process data without any understanding of what that data represents. Computer Dictionary 210 (Microsoft Press, 2d ed. 1994).)

Regarding to Group II claims 19-29, 50-60, and 63-72, Appellants argues that the method claims reciting steps producing a concrete, tangible and useful result are statutory subject matter independent of any technological art.

In response, the claims manipulate an abstract idea without practical application in the technological arts, because the claimed invention does not produce a “useful, concrete and tangible result”. The claimed invention as a whole must accomplish a practical application. That is, it must produce a “useful, concrete and tangible result.” State Street, 149 F.3d at 1373, 47 USPQ2d at 1601-02. The purpose of this requirement is to limit patent protection to inventions that possess a certain level of “real world” value, as opposed to subject matter that represents nothing more than an idea or concept, or is simply a starting point for future investigation or research (Brenner v. Manson, 383 U.S. 519, 528-36, 148 USPQ 689, 693-96); In re Ziegler, 992, F.2d 1197, 1200-03, 26 USPQ2d 1600, 1603-06 (Fed. Cir. 1993)). Accordingly, a complete disclosure should contain some indication of the practical application for the claimed invention, i.e., why the applicant believes the claimed invention is useful.

(11) *Related Proceedings Appendix*

The statement of the related proceedings appendix contained in the brief is correct

Art Unit: 3692

Respectfully submitted,

Nga Nguyen

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NGA NGUYEN
PRIMARY EXAMINER

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